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THE MOMENT a person passes from spiritual death to spiritual life through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a number of wonderful things take place in his life. Often he is not even aware of these, because they occur entirely in the realm of spiritual reality, and are known to us only as we examine the dynamics of salvation as revealed in God's written revelation, the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible clearly teaches that every Christian, no matter how weak or carnal, young or ignorant, has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, baptized by the Holy Spirit, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, as an instantaneous, unmerited, sovereign, irrevocable, gracious act of God, the moment he accepted Christ as his personal Saviour from sin. Perhaps among early Christians there were none quite so weak and carnal (worldly) as those who lived in the notoriously wicked city of Corinth, and yet to these Christians God, speaking through the Apostle Paul, applied the name "saints," and revealed some of the deepest truths concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19) and also His gifts to the church (I Cor. 12).

The Holy Spirit and Salvation

If we are to have any clear concept of what happens to a person when he becomes a Christian, we must understand the meaning of certain terms that describe this momentous event. To be *regenerated* means to be "born again" (John 3:3-8; I Pet. 1:23), to be spiritually "resurrected" (Rom. 6:13; Eph. 2:5), to be "created" anew (Eph. 2:10; II Cor. 5:17), and thus to have eternal life (John 5:24; I John 5:11-13). To be *baptized* by the Holy Spirit means to be united and organically joined to the mystical body of Christ, being forevermore perfectly identified with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and glory (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:10-12, 19). To be *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit means that my body has become the actual dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, making me, in a wonderful way, His temple (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19). To be *sealed* by the Holy Spirit means to be set apart by God as His own possession (Eph. 1:3;

4:30; I Cor. 1:22), and involves the idea of security, safety, ownership, and authority.

In his very valuable volume, "The Holy Spirit: A Comprehensive Study of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit," Dr. John F. Walvoord, president of Dallas Theological Seminary, analyzes the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation in the fourfold aspect presented above. None of these acts of God in behalf of the believer can be felt or experienced in themselves, but the experience of joy and inward peace follows as the new-born Christian begins to realize that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

A rather faint illustration of this might be the cancer patient who awakens from a general anesthesia

the Bible. One concerns *spiritual gifts*, and the other is *the filling of the Holy Spirit*. But whereas every believer at the moment of salvation is regenerated, baptized, indwelt, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, the same is not true for spiritual gifts and Spirit-filling. Spiritual gifts, according to I Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4:4-16, are given by God to every believer, but they differ in nature and extent. While one Christian may have the gift of teaching, others may have the gifts of ministering, administration, evangelism, faith, giving, or exhortation, and that in different degrees as the sovereign and gracious Saviour may please. The purpose of such gifts is fully described in Ephesians 4:12-15.

One of the questions that is often

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to discover that the source of his troubles, the cancer, is gone, but he had no experience whatever of the surgeon's operation that brought about this new condition in his body. Having faith in the surgeon's skill and wisdom, he came willingly to him, and submitted his body to the operation. But the surgeon did the work, and that without the conscious help or ingenuity of the patient. Salvation is a supernatural act of God which accompanies our faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, and is not a process by which we somehow change our ways and thus become acceptable to Him.

The Holy Spirit and Christian Living

Turning our attention now from the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of the believer, we must now consider briefly the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Two definite types of experience for the believer in his relationship to the Holy Spirit are presented clearly in

raised concerning spiritual gifts is whether or not the special gifts of the apostolic age (A. D. 30-90), such as prophecy, miracles, healing, and tongues, are still to be sought and expected among Christians today. The Book of Acts and the Epistles to the Corinthians show us clearly that such special gifts were granted by God to early Christians, but it is also clear that these gifts served a special purpose in that age which is no longer needful. Before the New Testament was completed (c. A. D. 90), prophets were needed to proclaim God's authoritative Word to the people, and miracles were needed to substantiate the message of true apostles and prophets as opposed to false ones. But the same passage of I Corinthians that describes those unusual gifts also contains the prediction that they would cease (I Cor. 13:8-10). The fact that no genuine case of such miraculous gifts has been witnessed since the first century confirms the conclusion that

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they were temporary and for a special purpose only.

Perhaps the most vital concern of the Christian today should be the matter of *the filling of the Holy Spirit*. He cannot control the number or type of spiritual gifts he may possess, but he can and must obey the command of the Scriptures to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). This means simply that the believer should allow no sin of thought or practice to hinder the full control of God's Holy Spirit in his life. As the Bible puts it, we must neither "quench" the Spirit (I Thess. 5:19), nor "grieve" the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), but rather "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). While being fully aware of the fact that in this life we are never sinless (I John 1:8, 10), we must also remember that willful continuation in sinful ways makes it impossible for God and the Holy Spirit to use us for the greater blessing of ourselves and others. Furthermore, such sins will be dealt with at the judgment seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:12-15; Rom. 14:10).

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